

# I'm worried about HIV and AIDS

## Why am I so scared of HIV?

Video of Why am I so scared of HIV?

### FAST FACTS

- There are only a few ways you can get HIV. Know the facts and be aware of the risks so you can protect yourself and others.
- Testing is the only way to know for sure whether or not you have HIV. Whatever the result, you can get on with your life.
- Antiretroviral treatment (ART) means that people living with HIV can live long and healthy lives. The sooner you get on the right treatment, the better your long-term health will be.

Are you worried [about HIV and AIDS](#)? We can help by talking you through some of the most common things people are concerned about when it comes to HIV.

## 1. I'm worried about getting HIV

You've probably heard a lot about how the virus is transmitted but the truth is that there are only a few [ways you can get HIV](#).

Unfortunately, there are a lot of [myths](#) about how HIV is transmitted, which can get in the way of the facts and confuse people.

Instead of worrying about HIV, learn how it's [transmitted](#) and what you can do to [protect yourself](#).

## 2. I'm worried about testing for HIV

It's normal to worry about testing for HIV and [what your result will be](#), but testing is the only way to know for sure if you have the virus. If you think you've put yourself at risk, or you're [at risk because of your situation](#), then get tested. It's never a bad idea to test, even if it's just to stop you from worrying.

People often don't test for HIV or put off testing because they're worried about what it means to be positive, what the test involves, or what other people will think. So remember:

- HIV tests are [quick and simple](#).
- Testing puts you [in control](#) of your sexual health.
- If you're positive, you can access [effective treatment](#).

### 3. I'm worried about what the test involves

You may be worried about the test itself but there's no reason to be – it's quick, painless and confidential, and uses just a tiny sample of your blood or a swab taken from your mouth.

Remember that the tester is there to help you – they do this all the time. You can ask them questions about what to expect. You can also take a look at our [HIV testing section](#) which guides you through everything you need to know about getting tested.

### 4. I'm worried about the test result

If you test negative, you can stop worrying! For a lot of people testing negative encourages them to take more responsibility for their sexual health as well as the health of their partner.

If you test positive, it's better for you to know as early as possible so that you can get the right treatment and support. Taking [antiretroviral treatment](#) means you can live a healthy life, enjoy sexual relationships, and have HIV-negative children.

### 5. I'm worried about what other people will think

A lot of people worry about testing for HIV, what it would mean for their future if they tested positive – and what people would think of them. Just the thought of going into a clinic stops some people testing: 'What if someone sees me going into the clinic?'

It's normal to worry but remind yourself of the facts about [living with HIV](#). Don't let fear get in the way of your health.

Sometimes other people's negative attitudes towards HIV and other STIs can put people off getting tested. People often have these negative views and attitudes simply because they don't understand the facts about HIV. If you know the facts, you'll feel more confident about ignoring or challenging people who talk negatively about HIV.

Remember, HIV is treatable but only if you know you've got it. The only way to know is to get tested. Testing regularly puts your mind at rest, and keeps you in control.

If you test negative, continue to focus on staying negative, and protect yourself and your partners from HIV and other STIs. If you test positive, you can take treatment to stay healthy. Being on [effective treatment](#) also reduces the risk of passing HIV on to your partners.

#### The most difficult situation is not knowing

If you're HIV positive and unaware it means that you're not getting the treatment and support you need to stay well.

Even if you don't have symptoms, your immune system will be deteriorating and eventually you'll get sick – why take that risk?

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I used to think that HIV was something that only happened to other people, since being diagnosed I've realised that that is not the case. It's been almost 10 years since I found out that I have

HIV, but now I can finally say that testing positive for HIV was not the end, but only the beginning of a bigger journey and chapter of my life.

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- James (from his [HIV testing personal story](#))

Forget about what other people think, your health is more important and you're better than that! Put your health first and get tested for HIV. Once you've done it you'll be informed and in control.

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